



STRIKE AGAINST APARTHEID

THE MASSIVE AAM demonstration on June 28 is proof positive that there exists a mighty groundswell of popular anger against apartheid. Tens of thousands are now asking what they can do to help the black masses in South Africa resolve the revolutionary situation positively.

The growing mass movement against apartheid has been exploited for reasons of popularity and leverage by a wide body of the establishment. It does not want to see apartheid smashed through revolution. Instead it wants to avoid revolution by encouraging reforms. It fears that unless Botha is whipped into carrying out the dismantling of apartheid the whole of southern Africa will be dragged into a conflagration the end result of which will be a series of revolutions ending in the establishment of a proletarian, socialist, order.

Thatcher's refusal to take an active stand against apartheid will cost Britain dear, say the likes of Healey, Steel and Owen. Her tacit support for Botha's state of emergency, her insistence "all sides" end their use of violence and the "mother knows best" lectures about how sanctions would hurt blacks will only quicken the slide towards full-scale civil war they say.

The government has no tactics,

no strategy and only doubts about South Africa. Thatcher says sanctions are out but insists that 'measures' are necessary. She says action must be co-ordinated by the leading imperialist powers to be effective and then boasts to Kinnoch in the House of Commons that Britain has taken more measures than any other leading industrial country. A not insignificant section of ruling class opinion fears the economic consequences of Britain's crisis of policy over South Africa. If Britain is seen to stand by apartheid when the blacks inevitably win not only will the economy be severely disrupted, after a prolonged civil war, but the new government will take vengeance on British and other top imperialists' investments and interests because of their refusal to take sides.

This is what lies behind Healey's South African visit, the Eminent Persons Group report, the EEC's 'joint strategy', and the tentative suggestions from the ranks of Tory wets that Thatcher impose sanctions. What motivates these calls for sanctions is not humanitarianism but fear. Not least the fear that the fighting comrades in Crossroads, Soweto and Alexandra, might make an anti-apartheid revolution and take it uninterruptedly to socialism.

If this happens, they reason, will

not workers in other countries take inspiration and follow suit? Will not imperialism lose the South African goose which has laid so many golden eggs? The best way to stop this happening, the best way to safeguard capitalism in southern Africa is to use mass pressure to get Thatcher to impose token measures, court Oliver Tambo and weep crocodile tears for the plight of the black masses. Our task is not to support these elements. They are doing their best to prevent the anti-apartheid revolution, or at the very least prevent it going uninterrupted towards socialism as the South African Communist Party is fighting for. Headline seekers like Terry Waite and Dennis Healey show how the British ruling class is split over South Africa but they are not friends of the South African masses, they are their enemies.

Should we demand the government imposes comprehensive sanctions? The answer must be yes. The government cannot be ignored. We must place demands on it.

This should be done not through pious calls urging Thatcher to side with the liberation movement. We must 'argue' using direct working class action. The trade union movement has for too long passed resolutions which in effect safely passed the buck to the government. Trade union officialdom has been

good on rhetoric but useless when it comes to organising real action. This has by and large been left to local rank and file initiative. Even then no steps have been taken to generalise these actions. We say talking-shop anti-apartheid conferences should become a thing of the past. The South African masses need action not hot air. Now is the time, as Oliver Tambo and the NUM's Cyril Ramaphosa have argued, for the workers to impose their own sanctions.

The first step must be a concerted and imaginative campaign of agitation and propaganda. We must educate workers, convince them and then organise them for direct action. All workers must be shown why they have a responsibility, and an interest, to find out if their bosses have a subsidiary in South Africa, if they are using South African imports or exporting products there.

By striking against apartheid they will also be striking against the Thatcher government and the bosses which back her and exploit them. The overthrow of apartheid would be a world wide blow against imperialism and would, if aided by direct solidarity, also go hand-in-hand with shifting the balance of class forces in the workplace and the nation in favour of the workers in Britain. To facilitate this, delegate based joint trade union anti-

apartheid committees should be established by trade councils and the AAM, and they should be united on a national basis as soon as possible.

If we simply let bourgeois Labour, Alliance and Tory establishment politicians, C of E clerics and assorted pacifists take the lead, no doubt at the end of the day, Thatcher will bend before the spectre of the revolutionary masses in South Africa and the wave of popular outrage against apartheid in Britain they wave in front of her. Thatcher's 'measures' would not, though, be real solidarity. They will be full of holes and designed only for show.

We must not allow this to happen. The way to do this is to begin agitating in the workers' movement for the setting of a date when the TUC must call a general strike unless there are water tight comprehensive sanctions. These sanctions must, of course, be supervised by workers. We cannot rely on the honesty, diligence and sincerity of the government and its officials. Workers in industry, commerce, at the airports, the docks, banks, telephone exchanges and post offices must be won to ensure the government and big business do not and cannot give succour to the apartheid regime in its hour of need.

Jack Conrad

Our Heroes

THE 'declaration of intent' by the Scottish Area NUM to call a one day strike for the victimised miners is to be welcomed. If Scottish separatism is avoided, if the action is projected so as to involve all British workers, it has every chance of being hugely successful.

Those miners still not working after 30 months, those still languishing in jail have waited patiently for such a move. For too long they have seen leaders of the workers' movement use their plight for anti-Tory hot air and the construction of class collaborationist alliances with 'anti-Thatcherite' churchmen and 'anti-Thatcherite' businessmen.

Comrade Mick McGahey quite correctly sees the need for this day of action to "involved the trade union movement as a whole". The date should now be set and the NUM use it to begin a concerted campaign to demand the unconditional release of imprisoned miners and the reinstatement of the sacked men to their previous jobs, with compensation and no loss of service entitlements.

There must be no truck with talk of relying on Neil (scab) Kinnock and 'the next Labour government'. Wilson left the Shrewsbury 2 to rot in jail. Heath was forced to free the Pentonville 5. Kinnock openly boasts he will leave our class war prisoners to serve their sentences.

Pious pleas to Thatcher and MacGregor are little more than declarations of weakness. They only understand strength. The time to act is now. Thatcher looks strong because our leadership is weak. But she can be forced to give in if our class as a whole asserts its strength.

A mighty nationwide strike would lift the morale of victimised miners. It could be a tremendous beginning to a serious fight for their freedom and reinstatement. More than that it would provide a mighty lift to the entire working class movement. The miners' defeat might not have been a strategic one, but it did represent a setback for all workers, not just the NUM.

Building a mighty mass movement around the victimised miners would as a by-product quickly erode the UDM. Its existence was a product of defeat. If the NUM can show it can look after its own, UDM members would soon begin to come back to the NUM in their thousands.

Movements can be judged on how they fight for and stand by their comrades who have fallen victim to the enemy. So far there has been a poor fight for the victimised miners. Responsibility though cannot be limited to the NUM. All workers' organisations, not least our CPGB, bear a heavy responsibility for this.

What of the *Morning Star*? Well at the AGM of the paper the Management Committee actually fought against launching a militant campaign on behalf of the class war prisoners which shows their inability to stand on the most basic working class principle and the worthlessness of their claims to be in the vanguard of the struggle for socialism: a bankruptcy in many ways personified by its chairman, Ken Gill.

Not only did he go along with the vote against the Stan Keable/Jack Collins motion on class war prisoners but the union he leads, TASS, has betrayed one of its most heroic members, comrade David Kitson.

Kitson has been a member of the union since 1942. He returned to South Africa in 1959, was arrested in 1964 and charged with being a leading commander of Umkonto we Sizwe. In 1969 TASS gave a solemn pledge to support him after his release. And in 1984, after serving the full 20 years of his sentence, Kitson came to Britain. He then toured the length and breadth of the country speaking against apartheid and enthusiastically took up a TASS financed scholarship at Ruskin.

Kitson has, as is known, disagreements with the London ANC. He has stated his earnest desire to mend his fences with them. But has rightly refused to denounce the hyperactive City of London AAM (of which he is not a member). The TASS leadership have used this as an excuse to withdraw their Ruskin sponsorship. This is a disgrace. Kitson has no savings, he is 65, he has no pension.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Scottish omission

In reply to comrade Jack Conrad, I find it important to say that he misses the essential point in reply to the two letters from Scotland published by you in *The Leninist* No.31. By this omission, he makes a few mistakes that are similar to those corrected by Lenin in his article, *Karl Marx the 'Utopian' and Rosa Luxemburg, the 'practical'*.

Marx, Engels and later on, Lenin, were regarded as 'utopian' by English 'socialists', when the former declared themselves in favour of the independence of Ireland. After independence, Marx, Engels and Lenin agreed, it would be possible to set up a federation of free and equal nations. Might I add that a socialist Scotland, should that arrive first, would give its complete support to the English working class in its struggle for emancipation. We would not support an English capitalist state as the Labour Party has done consistently.

To say that the Scottish do not want independence is indeed quite presumptuous. What kind of proof has comrade Conrad for this statement? The SNP only gained 15% of the vote at the recent regional council elections, but the SNP is in the main a bourgeois nationalist party as most Scottish people are aware. Most Scots voted Labour to keep the Tories out, a thing they found impossible at the last two general elections by the English people voting massively in favour of their overt class enemies, the Tories. Most political parties put forward 'devolution' for Scotland and that is widely regarded here, at least as a first step for Scottish independence.

The demand for 'separation' could be regarded as 'nationalistic' only if Scotland existed in a vacuum outwith the world. Unfortunately for English imperialists and chauvinists Scotland does not; and the struggle for a free Scotland will continue, especially the more that Britain, (England, in particular) remains a lap-dog of US imperialism, an oppressor in Ireland and a contributor towards famine and war in the struggling countries of the world. Is it not important to encourage the downfall of this second last 'great bastion of capitalism'?

While the slogan of practicality is as Lenin says, a mere slogan to cover the adoption of bourgeois aspiration (Lenin on *The Right of Nations to Self-determination*), the advanced workers of England should respect an anti-imperialist strategy which is not only of symbolic importance, but a necessity for the world revolutionary movement.

Quoting again from Lenin, "We fight on the basis of the given state; we cannot vouch for this or that path of national development, we must advance our class goal by all possible paths."

To some degree there is an organisational 'vacuum' in Scotland to take on board this anti-imperialist strategy in a consistent manner. Surely it is the bounden duty of members of the CPGB to do so? "Communists of the oppressed nation must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of their oppressed and their oppressor nation" (Lenin, *Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination*).

The national liberation of Scotland finds complete accord with the aspiration of other oppressed nations for their own national liberation from imperialism and for socialism in all lands. The struggle for the freedom of Scotland, or any subject nation, cannot as history has taught us, come from London. Communists in England and

Scotland should have the same basic goals and their real unity can be preserved in the spirit of anti-imperialism.

Yours in comradeship
Al Donaldson
Glasgow

Jack Conrad replies:

As readers will have seen comrade Donaldson has a strange ally in comrade Cockshott (the author of the other letter on the Scottish question). Comrade Cockshott and his friends in the so-called British and Irish Communist Organisation stand against Irish national liberation, instead championing the 'national rights' of the 'Ulster Scots'.

But what of comrade Donaldson himself? Well beneath the left veneer we find equally reactionary and dangerous positions. Let us point to a few instances:

1. Scotland is not Ireland. It is dishonest to quote Marx, Engels and Lenin on Ireland and to transpose this on to Scotland. If they were the same why did none of them call for Scottish independence? Why did Lenin fight for the formation of the CPGB and dismiss John MacLean's left nationalist sect?

2. Do the Scottish people want independence? We say no. Comrade Donaldson calls this "presumptuous". If this is the case why do only 15% of the Scottish electorate vote SNP — the only serious party standing on this nationalistic platform? Devolution is not independence and comrade Donaldson should have the honesty to admit it.

3. The fact that "most Scots voted Labour" (most did not vote Labour; surely he means the largest block of votes was obtained by Labour?) "to keep the Tories out" shows that Scotland in the main votes as part of Britain, not as a distinct nation. In contrast in the population of the Six Counties (part of Britain according to comrade Cockshott), despite all the efforts of British political parties to make the Irish good Britons they insist on voting for Irish political parties; Sinn Féin, the SDLP, the DUP and the Official Unionists, even the Alliance, (all existing and fighting around the border and the living national question in Ireland).

4. The Tory government is, comrade Donaldson seems to imply, the fault of "the English people voting massively in favour of their overt class enemies, the Tories." The fact is that the Tories only achieved a minority vote in England. It is criminal to blame Scotland's undoubted deep problems on the English people who are suffering no less — to do so is narrow nationalism pure and simple. More than that, the "English people" cannot vote for class enemies, overt or not. The English people, just as the Scottish people, or any other, includes all classes, the working class, the middle classes and the bourgeoisie. And did not many Scottish workers, just like English and Welsh workers, vote for enemies of our class, in the British Tory Party, the British Liberal Party, the British SDP and Britain's, bourgeois workers' party, the Labour Party? Of course they did.

5. "The demand for 'separation' could be regarded as 'nationalistic' only if Scotland existed in a vacuum outwith the world." Nonsense comrade. Scotland, like England, and Wales, is part of the British state and its working class is part of the British working class. The demand for separation, given the concrete conditions of today, can only be described as nationalistic, not least when it is being put forward by a communist.

6. Comrade Donaldson says "England in particular" is a "lap-dog of US imperialism". This is again nonsense. There is a British state. It is not a "lap-dog of US imperialism" but the world's second greatest imperialist power. Comrade Donaldson asks us "is it not

important to encourage the downfall" of what he calls the "second last (sic) 'great bastion of capitalism'?" Yet he seems determined to shed all direct responsibility for this task. Instead he wants to don the garb of the tartan nationalist, imagining the struggle in Scotland to be the same as in El Salvador, Namibia or Ireland. In these countries the major contradiction is one of national oppression which necessitates a national liberation struggle. In Britain, and that includes Scotland, the major contradiction is between labour and capital. A contradiction which can only be resolved through socialist revolution. Yes, it is British imperialism which is responsible for the national oppression of Ireland and it contributes towards famine and war. But it will never be overthrown unless workers in Britain unite across all sectional and regional differences and recognise that their task is to overthrow 'our' imperialism which is as you say the "common enemy" of workers in England and Scotland — and we would add Wales.

7. We are presented with a quote from Lenin. It says "We fight on the basis of the given state." This is precisely the principle we are arguing for. We communists must fight on the basis of the given British state, and advance our class goal (not national goal) by all possible paths. Leninist flexibility of tactics has nothing to do with the nationalistic project of a Scottish, English, Welsh and while we are at it, an Isle of Man or a Cornish etc. state.

8. Communists in England are duty bound to defend the right of nations to self-determination. But we British communists are confronted with a British state, a British nation. We have a common language, territory, culture, economy and tradition and there is the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of Scottish and Welsh people do not want separation. Britain is divided along class lines not national lines, and so we must fight all backward looking nationalistic poison, above all when it is given a veneer of socialism.

9. The comrade quotes Lenin this time on the duty of communists in the oppressed nation. They, he says "must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of their oppressed and their oppressing nation". Again this is exactly our point. The duty of communists in Scotland (as it was for communists in the Ukraine or Georgia) is to implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of workers. This means British communists will organise in all parts of Britain and fight for the rock hard unity of workers in England, Wales and Scotland. That means opposing all manifestations of nationalism, whether it be English chauvinistic arrogance, Scottish nationalism or Welsh parochialism especially in our own ranks. It means fighting against attempts to liquidate our CPGB in Scotland using the arguments of left nationalism.

The CPGB must and will organise workers throughout Britain for the British socialist revolution.

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.

WRITE TO:
The Editor
BCM Box 928
LONDON
WC1N 3XX



Comrade McLennan: not pointing to victory

Don't mourn - ORGANISE

7 DAYS' REPORT of the AGM of the PPPS (the co-op which owns the *Morning Star*) was full of self pity. The other side mobilised complains 7 Days, the *Morning Star* "ran a daily page 3 ad for its anti-Communist Party candidates", it "staged letters" welcoming the new tabloid.

This, 7 Days rightly calculates, "ensured a large majority supporting the paper's Management Committee and its particular brand of politics."

It is of course true the majority, particularly at the London meeting, gave Executive Committee speakers a rough time. Comrade McLennan was the butt of much vitriol — in fact the end of his speech was drowned in a flood of jeering and booing.

Surely though any communist worth their salt should be able to withstand such treatment. Surely they should be able to give as good as they get, comrade Monty Johnston gave us an example of that.

Moreover, is there not an element of hypocrisy in operation here? At the last Party congress hard line Euros showed they could shout and jeer along with the most bone headed *Morning Star* supporter.

Some might even remember when the Party called an Emergency General Meeting of the PPPS, those speaking for the hundred or so who did not deny the legitimacy of the meetings, but did oppose Euro-communism, were heckled and booed.

At the YCL's last congress those supporting Leninist positions were subjected to personal abuse and had their contributions constantly interrupted by Euros and Straight Leftists alike.

Comradely behaviour? No. But communists should be more concerned with hard political questions than bleating on about rudeness as 7 Days does.

The hard political question is that neither 7 Days nor *Marxism Today* ran a campaign for the EC's candidates as they should have. The Party did not organise a fleet of coaches and mini buses as it should have and crucially the Party had not won the argument as to why shareholders should vote for its slate of candidates.

Pro-Party politics and a tolerant regime in the Party could create the conditions for unity in action. If this

was the case Chater's liquidationist rebellion could be easily defeated.

Last year the Party won around 2,000 votes — roughly speaking the same number as the Chaterites won this year. Why didn't the Party mobilise even the support it had last year? Why was its vote down to about 50% of 1985's AGM?

Is it because some Euro leaders have thrown in the towel? Whether or not this is the case we will not accept defeatism no matter what quarter it comes from. Chater could have been beaten. Chater will be beaten.

Comrade Ian McKay was quoted in 7 Days as saying the result of the AGM was "a serious setback for the labour and democratic movement." It was certainly a serious setback for the Communist Party.

Because of this there needs to be some thorough going self criticism. Comrade McKay should admit his failure and the failure of the EC to win the Party rank and file.

It is no good just repeating that the *Morning Star* "will continue to present sectarian policies". It is on a course towards Labourism, not the sectarian wilderness. When its policies can get twice as many votes at the AGM as the Communist Party itself there is no room for complacency. The leadership must be held responsible for the defeat and the alienation of the majority of the Party members.

In the aftermath of the AGM the East Midlands and West Middlesex District Committees voted to side with the *Morning Star* and its liquidationism. The resolutions are reprinted generously in the *Morning Star* (July 1 and June 16 respectively). The West Middlesex resolution, in similar fashion to the East Mids one, declares the "results of the PPPS AGM show that there is overwhelming support for the tabloid and the PPPS Management Committee."

This the resolution states is due to "repeated violations of rules since the 1984 district congresses and the EC's retreat from Marxist-Leninist principles."

It calls for the EC to "return to legality" and reinstate "individual members, branches, borough and district committees against which disciplinary action has been taken." The EC should, it continues, "stop its attacks on the *Morning Star*... and

unite the Party on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles". If it is unable to do this the district committee "suggests" in conclusion "it resigns and makes way for those who will work to create unity amongst communists."

We fight tooth and nail for the Party to be won back to unity around Marxist-Leninist principles. But if the West Middlesex and East Mids DC's think the editors of the *Morning Star*, its Management Committee and the leaders of the Communist Campaign Group stand on these principles, it only goes to show their members have no grasp of the revolutionary essence of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The Chaterites defend the transparently reformist 1978 *British Road to Socialism*. Chater himself has declared the *Morning Star* to be the "daily living embodiment of the *British Road*", and indeed it is. Because of this communists are duty bound to attack the *Morning Star*. Not for its "sectarianism" but its opportunism.

As to the contention that the "present EC has lost the confidence of the Party membership" this, as we have said, seems to be the case.

For communists, though, this means redoubling our efforts to change the internal regime.

It means crystallising the 550-650 votes cast at the AGM for motions supported by *The Leninist* into a pro-Party nucleus.

It means drawing into the Party the best and most advanced sections of our working class in order to reforge the CPGB.

It does not mean joining with the liquidators grouped around the *Morning Star*.

PUBLIC MEETING

65th Anniversary of the South African Communist Party

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square Holborn, London WC1

Wednesday July 30 7.30pm

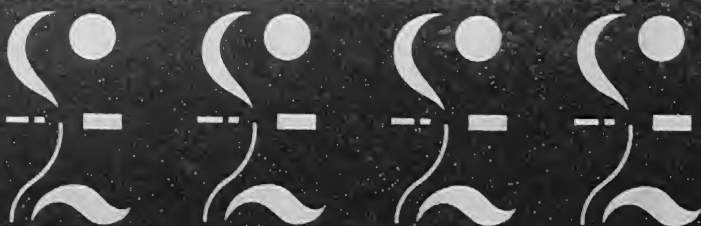
Speakers include: Joe Slovo, Alfred Nzo, Gordon McLennan

The trial of the NJM 19 has been an anti-democratic farce. The defendants have been subjected to regular beatings in order to break their spirit. The papers necessary for their defence have been seized by the US occupation forces and have not been returned to the defendants despite numerous requests to do so. The trial is being conducted in the Richmond Hill prison compound which prevents the attendance of a large number of Grenadians. The defendants have called for the trial to be moved to St Georges proper so that more people can attend. Moreover the trial is going ahead despite a plea from the defendants to adjourn it pending the outcome of a hearing at the Grenada Supreme Court on two major points of law, which have an important bearing on the trial. Solidarity with the NJM leaders is being co-ordinated by The New Jewel 19 Committee. It can be contacted at: 388, Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

The *Morning Star's* reporting of the Stalker affair reveals a great deal about the editor's thirst for respectability and faith in British 'fair play'. In the editorial of June 23 it is suggested that John Stalker, Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester, should be allowed to continue his investigation into the RUC's E4A unit and its shoot-to-kill policy. The editorial says, if "it is true that there is a shoot-to-kill unit in the RUC, linked with the intelligence services, this must be exposed. It is a matter of public concern if it is true." This syrupy liberalism is concluded in the following way "If there has been some sort of conspiracy to get rid of Mr Stalker, then it is difficult to see how the Home Secretary can allow those involved to continue in office. Unless all these matters are cleared up publicly, confidence in the RUC and the Manchester police will be eroded." What planet is the editor of the *Morning Star* from? Surely it can't be this one. The police in Manchester have a reputation of authoritarianism, narrow mindedness and brutality. Hasn't Chater heard of the Manchester police conspiracy against two students, Steven Shaw and Sarah Hollis? It exposed police use of illegal surveillance, physical assault and burglary. As to the RUC. Ask any nationalist in Derry or Belfast about their confidence in them. Between July 1981 and February 1984 at least 20 unarmed nationalists were victims of Britain's shoot-to-kill policy in the Six Counties. But this is only the tip of an iceberg of British murder and terror. Since 1969 2,300 people have died and 24,000 have been seriously injured as a direct consequence of Britain's determination to maintain its grip over Ireland. The RUC is a sectarian force. It is full of bigots, murderers and psychopaths. It is an organ of imperialism which like the Manchester police must be smashed not reformed. To hell with Chater's talk of preventing the erosion of public confidence. We will do our utmost to quickly erode any illusions our working class still has about the forces of bourgeois law and bourgeois order.

Viraj Mendis is a supporter of the RCG. He is fighting against deportation to Sri Lanka where the least he can expect is arrest for his activities in Manchester in support of the Tamils. Viraj came to Britain at the age of 17. His experiences of racism and exploitation led him towards communism. "I was looking for a way to fight racism" he says "and communism was the most effective way." Viraj took up the cause of all oppressed peoples not least the Irish. No doubt this is what lies behind the British state's determination to be rid of him. Camden Trades Council, along with many other organisations in the workers' movement, quite rightly decided to back the Viraj Mendis campaign and support the march from Manchester against his deportation which is due in London on July 26. Unfortunately some Straight Leftist Party members opposed the campaign arguing they needed more information and the issue was not simple. Well comrades the issue is simple. Are you on the side of the oppressed, yes or no?

The *Morning Star* sells the majority of its print run to the Soviet Union and countries in Eastern Europe. We are told that the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic are now no longer paying a year in advance. We also hear that after much effort by comrade Gerry Pocock the socialist countries have agreed to take large quantities of 7 Days.



We are now in the midst of our Summer Offensive. Up to the end of September those participating in our Offensive will be giving three weeks income to *The Leninist* as a minimum. In the mean time our £600 monthly target must be met. As we go to press we have only £150 in our fund. As we have said repeatedly there is no room for complacency. Our £600 monthly fighting fund is an absolute necessity if our fortnightly is to continue. So during our Summer Offensive our pro-Leninist readers have a particular responsibility. You who are not participating must step into the breach.

ONCE UPON A TIME...



ROYALTY

ITS ORIGINS, FUNCTION AND FUTURE

YOU MAY take the piss... you may say it's all irrelevant ... but it's a fair bet you haven't avoided the gushing torrent of wedding bells syrup.

The affair of Andrew Windsor and Miss S Ferguson will be a great day for the lousy and loyal brigade, including Neil Kinnock.

When the two walk down the aisle of that West End church traffic will suffer delay (about all you'll see about it in the *Morning Star*). But in numerous workplaces, working class areas clubs and pubs there will be spontaneous parties where the couple will be celebrated and toasted with endless alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

So this Barnum and Bailey cum Saatchi and Saatchi event is not just a ruling class jamboree. It does have something to do with the class struggle. Of course the great hoodwinking media does its best to use royalty to win the hearts and minds of the population. At the same time it tries to put a gloss on the fact that the wedding ceremony is a fertility rite and Randy Andy (as the pop press back slappingly call the groom) and the Walking Womb (as the hypocritical pop press would never have the honesty to call the bride) will be expected to do their duty. The young Karl Marx when he was arguing against Hegelianism in the early 1840s made a point which casts some light on this aspect of the royal wedding. "The hereditary powers of the ruler" he wrote in his *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State* "flows from the concept of ruler. He is supposed to be specifically distinct from all other persons and from the whole species. What is the final, solid distinguishing factor between persons? The body. Now the highest function of the body is sexual activity. The highest constitutional act of the king, therefore, is his sexual activity; for by this alone does he make a king and so perpetuate his own body. The body of his son is the reproduction of his own body, the creation of a royal body."

Royal origins

As well as doing their bit for the fertility of society the royals open town halls, receive foreign guests, eat interminable meals, go on 'goodwill' trips (braving bare bums) and of course 'sell Britain' on behalf of all of us. And while doing all of these things the pop press do their best to put across the idea of the royals as just like you and me. So royalty has two faces, two aspects. On the one hand they are presented as the decendants of god-men on earth, the icing on the great British cake; and on the other just ordinary plum duff.

How is it though, that the decendants of those who claimed to be God's divine instrument, chosen in heaven, and no mere mortals today combine the symbolism of the divine right of kings with the folksyness of an American president?

The answer lies in the distant past. The ceremonial surrounding the nuptials still bear traces, as do all royal ceremonies, of the far away origins of kings as tribal chiefs, as interceder with the gods, as war leaders.

Its pedigree can be traced directly to the elected leaders of the tribes, the gentile social organisations of pre-history. Then primitive 'democracy' was the basis of social decisions.

As tribal society develops, as productive capabilities increase, as the division of labour progresses division into classes progresses, and private property arises.

"The military leader of the people" writes Engels in *The Origin of the Family* "becomes an indispensable permanent official ... Military leader, council, assembly of the people are the organs of the gentile society developed into military democracy — military, since war and organisation for war, have now become regular functions of national life....

"They are barbarians, they think it easier and in fact more honorable to get riches by pillage than by work ...

"The wars of plunder increase the power of the supreme military leader and the subordinate commanders, the customary election of their successors from the same families is gradually transformed, especially after the introduction of the father right, into a right of hereditary succession, first tolerated, then claimed, finally usurped; the foundation of the hereditary monarchy and the hereditary nobility is laid".

Then, Engels continues, the organs of the tribal constitution "tear themselves loose from their roots in the people" and change from "instruments of the will of the people into independent organs for the domination and

oppression of the people".

In this way the tribal/gentile constitution was destroyed and replaced by the state under a king.

Bourgeois monarch

Kings (and queens) also in a sense acted as the handmaiden of bourgeois society. Engels again, this time in the *Dialectics of Nature* wrote:

"Royalty, with the support of the burghers of the towns, broke the power of the feudal nobility and then established the great monarchies, based essentially on nationality, within which the modern European nations and modern bourgeois society came to development. And while the burghers and nobles were still fighting one another the German Peasant War pointed prophetically to future class struggles, by bringing on the stage not only the peasants in revolt — that was no longer anything new — but behind them the beginnings of the modern proletariat, with the red flag in their hands and the demand for the common ownership of goods on their lips."

But the bourgeoisie did not prove grateful. In Britain Cromwell's New Model Army finished off the Stuart absolute monarchy and opened the way for the unfettered development of capitalism. In the Great Revolution the popular masses not only flocked into parliament's army but also acted as a republican advance guard. Their elected regimental delegates — their agitators — were a faint whisper of what the Russian and European armies and navies were to be nearly 200 years later, the representatives of soliders' soviets.

Inspired by the Levellers the army rank and file challenged the very institution of monarchy. At Ware, in Hertfordshire, where the pro-Leveller regiments assembled, the soldiers wore in their hats copies of the Leveller programme. Cromwell and the grandees had to go along with them some of the way.

But, just as with the Robespierre regime of revolutionary France, the bourgeoisie and Cromwell were frightened of events running beyond their control. The radical Levellers were crushed just as the *sansculotte* Hebertists and Enrages were in 1793. And for the sake of stability, after Cromwell's death a deal was made to re-establish the monarchy, a monarchy more in the bourgeois image. This was clearly a compromise but it did help cement a united front of the upper classes against internal and external enemies.

Yet, republicanism amongst the 'lower orders' still lived. The profligacy of the restored court, the hankerings after a return to divine rule, led to a desire for something fitted more to the compromise. So came what the establishment calls the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Out went the crypto-Catholic James II and in came the Protestant succession and William of Orange. The British constitutional monarchy was born.

In the *Origin of the Family*, Engels says: "The highest form of the state, the democratic republic, which in our modern social condition becomes more and more an unavoidable necessity and is the form of the state in which alone the last decisive battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie can be fought out — the democratic republic, no longer officially recognises differences of property. Wealth here employs its power indirectly, but all the more surely."

This was done in two ways, by plain corruption of officials, of which the US provides the classic example, and by an alliance between the government and the stock exchange.

That a democratic republic is not essential to this brotherly bond between government and stock exchange is proved not only the old German and French empires but today by Britain and Japan.

Indeed British capitalism quickly created a bourgeois monarchy. The constitutional monarchy of the Restoration and then the Hanoverians was skillfully used by the British bourgeoisie as a means of cementing an alliance with the landowning classes and the heirs of the aristocracy so as to live as quietly as possible. At the same time the myth of the political neutrality of the monarchy was cultivated for the working class.

So the capitalist state carried the monarchy along with it. As capitalism developed the monarchy developed; till now the institution of the monarchy has been completely woven into the British bourgeois state and its unwritten constitution.

British capitalism likes to keep its powder

dry, and the wonders of royal privilege are those to be trundled out if the need comes, or when the need comes.

The official handbook on Britain, published by the government's Central Office of Information states that the United Kingdom is governed by Her Majesty's Government in the name of Queen. As the head of state she has the power to declare war and make peace. The supreme legislative authority is the Queen in parliament, that is to say, the Queen and the two houses of parliament — the House of Lords and the elected House of Commons.

But there is also the Her Majesty's Privy Council, that assembly of past and present cabinet ministers, there for life, the cream of the establishment, which has the power to make orders in council which have complete executive authority, under powers delegated by acts passed in parliament — a perfect mechanism for the replacement of bourgeois democracy with naked dictatorship.

Loyal reformists

Engels said it was "difficult to say who" in Germany "scored most by the introduction of universal suffrage." He then made the telling point that as long as the proletariat "is not yet ripe for its self-liberation, so long will it in its majority recognise the existing order of society as the only possible one and remain politically the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing."

This is because the dominant ideas in any society are the ideas of the ruling class. Despite this radical republicans were plenty on the ground in Britain during those days, and their spirit lasted well into Victorian times. The early Hanoverians had a rough ride. Not a particularly savoury bunch anyway, they faced not only the clamour of the poverty stricken masses, but a disloyal Jacobite opposition among sections of the ruling class.

What has become the national anthem was then a faction song, verses (not of course sung nowadays) spoke of crushing rebellious Scots, and the Jacobites were attacked for their 'knaveish tricks'.

Yet as capitalism evolved into monopoly capitalism and imperialism, finance capital not only seized the state, but subordinated all other sections of the bourgeoisie to it. Moreover as a by-product of imperialism a labour aristocracy was born. This meant the big drum of king worship (queen worship actually) could be banged by the bourgeoisie and leaders of the skilled working class would jump into line and beg like trained dogs in the hope of morsels from the rich man's imperialist table.

The story is told of Edward, Prince of Wales, (later to become Edward VII) seeking to entice trade union leaders to back one of his 'Colonial and Indian' exhibition in 1886. In his history of London Trades Council, George Tate tells how the heir-apparent invited trades council members to Sandringham, and the toadying opportunists in their acceptance wrote "the contemplation of the productions from the vast resources of the kingdoms constituting the British Empire have had the effect of lifting the hearts and minds of thousands of industrial people from the narrow limits and occupations of the workshop to a keener interest in all that relates to the welfare of their fellow-countrymen beyond the seas". The toads duly went to Sandringham to be received "most courteously" by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

The militant tradition of Chartism when trade union leaders took their seats on the platforms of republican demonstrations was drowned in the flood tide of such respectability. For that Sandringham visit was just the first drop in what became a sea of opportunist fawning. This saw the first Labour Party prime minister, J Ramsay MacDonald, agonising over how he would look in court dress when he went to the palace for the King's blessing. In the same spirit today we see Ron Todd's TGWU give the Queen Mother honorary membership.

One does not need to state the Labour Party's present position on the monarchy. They are happy to be the left wing of capitalism, so they are happy to hob nob with court circles. Even the Labour Party's Willie Hamilton is a poor excuse for a republican. This loudmouthed Labourite stands on his party's right wing and it is said only attacked the monarchy as a cynical ploy to secure sympathy from voters who had previously returned the Communist Party member, Willie Gallacher, as MP.

So what about the CPGB?

The first socialist groups in Britain inscribed republicanism on their banner. It went without

saying that this was the position of the founders of our Party.

Even in the 1930s our Party campaigned honourably against the extravagance, the hypocrisy and the junketings of the coronation and the jubilee-balloo of George V.

Disloyal communists

When the brandy-soaked monarch accompanied by the enamelled horror of his Queen Mary drove in state to St Paul's for God's help they passed through Ludgate Circus. There a banner suddenly unfurled over his carriage with the CPGB slogan 'Twenty-five years of Hunger and War' emblazoned on it. This slogan was used up and down the country in anti-jubilee demonstrations.

For the 1937 coronation of George VI (shortly after his pro-Nazi brother Edward VIII had been sacked) the CPGB produced a series of penny pamphlets which sold in their tens of thousands. The *Plain Man's Guide to the Coronation* was written under the titles of, *One Happy Family, Parade or War, How is the Empire?*

The Party programme was naturally against the monarchy. The draft programme submitted to the 16th Congress (which was postponed because of the outbreak of World War II) dealt quite extensively with the question of the monarchy. After declaring that the capitalist class had "won power by violent revolution and civil war to overthrow the absolute monarchy based upon the landowning aristocracy" it went on to describe how the rising capitalist class "became afraid of the further advance of the people, whose armies had won the revolution." Therefore the draft stated they betrayed the republic which they had won and set up the monarchy anew, henceforth under their control, as the cover for their power. "The alliance of all sections of the exploiters against the people, of the landowners, merchants, financiers and later the industrial capitalists under the cover of a puppet monarchy and aristocratic trappings had remained the basis of the British state." The Party aimed therefore at the "abolition of the capitalist state apparatus".

By the time of the first edition of the *British Road to Socialism* in 1951 the whole issue of the state was becoming blurred. This programme spoke of the House of Commons being made the "sole national authority freed from the restrictive influences of the House of Lords and the monarchy". This could be interpreted as

suggesting the monarchy would continue but not be connected to the House of Commons. Whether or not this is the case reformism had set in and being a 'progressive' disease everything would eventually fall victim.

Thus today the subject of republicanism is almost taboo.

The Communist Campaign Group hasn't got round to the issue yet. As to its *Morning Star* ... the *Morning Star* moves in the direction of the left trade union economic wind. Its treatment of monarchy is put to shame by the public school semi-aristocratic sneering of *Private Eye* and *Spitting Image*.

There have been a few articles in *Marxism Today* on the monarchy. The results were mish-mashy, fit only for the rubbish bin of petty bourgeois journals. Rosalind Brunt, a communications lecturer from Sheffield, for instance wrote a piece in July 1984 in which she speculates about the above class character of the royals and how the abolition of the monarchy is not a seriously achievable goal because of its position as an "unconscious and enormously popular unifying symbol."

How much better did Tommy Jackson put it in the pamphlet *The Jubilee* which he wrote for the Party:

"The Jubilee celebrations are in fact part of the class war preparations of the ruling capitalist gang who know that their evil system is tottering to its collapse. The right way to greet the 'Jubilee' is to make it an occasion for mass demonstrations of loyalty to the international solidarity of the working class struggle, of loyalty to the red flag of revolutionary socialism, of loyalty to the fraternal union in struggle of all who are exploited and oppressed, of loyalty to the united front against war and fascism, of loyalty to the proletarian revolution triumphant in the USSR, of loyalty to the militant proletariat everywhere, and its battle philosophy, revolutionary proletarian socialism and communism."

"That is the only way in which a worker can celebrate the Jubilee without disgracing himself and betraying the cause of his class."

As far as any communist is concerned the only principled position is the abolition of the monarchy. *The Leninist* is fighting to reforge the CPGB and rescue it from the sorry fate of becoming Her Majesty's Loyal Communist Party. More than that as we said in the editorial in No.29 "When our revolution comes we will as well as finishing the bourgeoisie at last finish the job the bourgeoisie started in 1642."

Tony Eastman

On a right royal scale



Could you live on £10,000 (and a little bit more) a day?

The annual handout by the British state to the royal family tops £5 million for the first time this year.

A 4% increase in their sub gives the royals a grand total of £5,031,700 to play with — they do after all also have huge private fortunes which take most of them into the billionaire category.

The Queen herself, already the richest woman in the world, got an extra

£160,000 via our taxes. Her pin money now tots up to £4,136,800.

The Queen Mother gets £359,100; the Duke of Edinburgh £200,300; Princess Anne £124,800. Even obscure royals get yearly handouts that would keep ordinary workers in luxury for a life time. Princess Alice, Duchess Gloucester gets £49,200 while her husband the duke gets £97,800, not bad for opening the odd charity garden gate and hypermarket.



Jeffrey Archer, pulp author and deputy chairman of the Conservative Party was pictured in a recent trade magazine, smiling inanely and thumbing his way through a copy of 7 Days. No, not our 7 Days, the give-away 7 Days leisure supplement of the Renfrewshire Gazette. The real 7 Days, as the official organ of the leadership of the Communist Party might have raised less of a smile with Mr. Archer. Then again...

Nice of both the Spartacist League and the Revolutionary Communist Party to promote the South African Communist Party, we feel. Both have recently featured pictures of South African protesters brandishing red flags with hammers and sickles, the banner of the SACP. Typically both however are totally dishonest about the influence of the Party. While the Spartacist League at least have mentioned the Party (unlike the RCP in any of their reporting of South Africa), they arrogantly pooh-pooh the claims of South African people that "lots of us are communists now".

Stuart King, leading Workers' Power cadre, thoroughly confused Leninist comrades who attended one of the WRP's open seminars in London. Stuart got onto his hind legs and told us all that "centrists can never make revolutions". But then, according to both Workers' Power and the WRP dogma, "counterrevolutionaries" (ie. communists), can make revolutions. Isn't the world a funny place...?

Nearly one thousand people have now been arrested on the News International picket lines. Among them is Calvin Tucker, a prominent Straight Left Party member. He was arrested near the Wapping main gate for alleged arson of a News International billboard! The arrest took place at 1.30am on Saturday June 15. Can anyone who saw the arrest or the billboard burning please ring Jane Cocker on 801 4491 or 272 8096.

Which Labour minister threatened to use troops to break a picket line at the Windscale nuclear reprocessing plant? Had Walter Marshall, who was appointed by Margaret Thatcher to head of the Central Electricity Generating Board in the run up to the miners' Great Strike, as his chief scientific advisor? Sanctioned the nuclear industry signing a secret deal with Rio Tinto Zinc for the supply of Uranium from Namibia, which is occupied by South Africa? Tony Benn of course.

THE BANNER OF sisterhood was once more unfurled at *Woman Alive* over July 5-6. A rather threadbare attempt to rally all the sisters long devoid of a movement to call their own, long devoid of a momentum that was the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). An event that would prove to be of little relevance and only minor interest to communists if it weren't for the fact that it is our very own Communist Party that is holding the banner poles.

That *Marxism Today* sponsored this feminist folly should come as no surprise to readers of *The Leninist*; ever willing to dance to the tune of the latest petty-bourgeois fad, ever willing to distort the slightest whim of the middle classes to a point of communist principle our Euro-darlings can then legitimately state that to stage such an event is "a logical extension of our political commitments as feminists to strengthening feminism".

So let us step into the 'woman' question and examine why as genuine communists we must oppose the feminist orthodoxy in our Party. The origins of the WLM lie in the radical stirrings of the swinging sixties. In the years following World War II British capitalism underwent an unprecedented boom. The middle classes enjoyed the security of a 'boom' period and the slackened reins of convention it brought with it. Individual experimentation in 'freedom' and 'life style' were no threat; the economic expansion of British imperialism continued no matter how many peace-niks resolved to 'study war no more'. Post war boom years saw jobs in plenty. New industries were springing up, old sectors were expanding. The age of the assembly line had truly dawned. Capitalism demanded a bigger workforce — so it called up the reserve.

Women are of key importance to capitalist production. They perform the essential tasks of bearing future workers and providing domestic work freely. But it is these tasks that ensure women are prevented from playing a full and equal role in production. Women exist as a cheap, unorganised reserve army of labour which according to the needs of capital accumulation can be drawn into and thrown out of employment easily and inexpensively. This then is the essence of women's oppression under capitalism.

With full employment for males and still plenty more jobs to go round the promotion of the housewife was suspended — a ploy that had been put into operation immediately following the war to drive women back to the home now that the men had returned from battle to reclaim their jobs and to father a new workforce, having returned in smaller numbers.

But when the boom had exhausted the reserves of male workers, a shift in emphasis took place. The 'all woman' restrictive clothing and immovable beehive hair styles of the fifties were replaced by the more practical, casual styles of the sixties. Women hailed the arrival of the contraceptive pill. For in this lay the freedom promised. Effectively severing sex from reproduction, women staked a claim for liberation. But even the educated, wealthy and now assertive bourgeois women soon had to admit the end result was not real liberation. And so we greet the WLM.

A national movement dynamic and radical in its glory days. Founded on the four demands of: 1. Equal education and job opportunities. 2. Equal pay. 3. Free 24-hour nurseries. 4. Free contraception and abortion on demand. But in these demands lies both the birth and death of the



Greenham antics

WLM. These demands whilst not incorrect in the abstract simply reflect the fact that women are oppressed, highlighting four manifestations of that oppression. They do not seek to tackle that oppression directly. Thus the WLM could never identify the true enemy of women. For these feminists society is divided by sex and gender alone — there are men and there are women "a precept which unites all radical feminists is that the fight for women's liberation is primarily against men" (Coote and Campbell *Sweet Freedom*, p. 29). But objectively for working class women their class brothers are not the enemy. They are united by a common exploitation, a class exploitation and an interest in ending all exploitation through communism.

What feminists fight for is not an end to the rotten, class divided capitalist system that perpetrates women's subordination but equality within that system. For bourgeois and petty bourgeois women, equality with their men is the equality to exploit the working class — for working class women, equality is ending this exploitation with their class brothers. If the class interests and basis of the WLM were ever in doubt capitalism needed only to look at the culture of the movement to be reassured. The bourgeoisie's favourite watchword 'individualism' was the orientation of the movement.

The notion of the individual's interest transcending society's is the life-blood of capitalist morality and the prevalent preoccupation of the WLM. Communists understand that individuality of the working class is strangled by the capitalist system and that full individual development will only be realised through collectivism and the destruction of the system which destroys and distorts all manner of human potential.

Rejecting our democratic centralism the WLM took the organisational form of 'small groups' with 'no leadership' 'sitting in circles' and 'sharing experiences' engaging in 'consciousness raising' — all in an effort to make every individual's experience of oppression unique "we believe in getting people to interact... We want them to themselves make an analysis of their situation, which will lead them to action" (Coote and Campbell *Sweet Freedom*, p. 23). So petty bourgeois women translated their personal feelings into loose political

awareness and came up with the turgid slogan of the sisterhood 'the personal is political' and what the sisters mean by that is "consciousness-raising.. makes personal experience the base on which theory and strategy are built" (*Ibid* p.237).

Oppression can be experienced personally, true, but fighting from an individual stance will produce nothing more than individual oppression. Real change will only come when particular oppression is fought in the general context of the working class struggle. Wrong say the sisters, their bigoted understanding of the revolutionary teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin is reduced to the laughable level of "there is no reason to see them as the bee's knees in every subject" (Rowbotham *Beyond the fragments*, p.63) — after all, they are only men!!!

So we end up with a feminist women's movement "preoccupied with living a liberated life rather than becoming a movement for the liberation of women" (*Ibid*, p.41). The first serious test for the solidarity of the sisters came in 1974 and Britain's economic stagnation. In recession middle class radicalism is curtailed and forced rightward, the bourgeoisie are on the offensive — and the sisters not surprisingly find it easy to drop any rebellious activity and opt for liberal pleas for reform.

The movement disbanded its national co-ordinating committee and concentrated on its retreat, on developing smaller, more separate groups "linked chiefly by a sense of involvement and common cause" (*Sweet Freedom*, p.35). The hard sell of the individualistic pursuits leads to the fragmentation of the movement, with the movement's blessing. These once united sisters now find themselves in groups often antagonistic to each other; white, black, Irish, Asian, hetero, homo, disabled, old etc. — alliances are impossible because one section is seen as another's oppressor. The rejection of class defined oppression leads the women's movement to this shambles but more significantly to reaction.

In the name of feminism these so called radicals line up with the bourgeoisie and move into the politics of 'self help' and 'community support' which essentially means taking the burden off the ruling classes to provide state services. The feminist's retreat is plain for all to see. What we witness now is the WLM, a movement founded on

'free abortion on demand' remember, failing very, very miserably to even defend women's rights in the face of the recent scandalous attacks by Powell, Gillick and Warnock.

Instead the sisters are retiring into the cosy politics of wholefood and enamel jewelry — the floppy politics of Greenham passivity — and the reactionary politics of "reclaiming traditional feminine skills as a new expression of women's liberation and resistance" (*Ibid* p.8). For those that have not given up the hobby and returned to suburbia, an option for the feminist politics of reform has always been the Labour Party. Indeed many took the step sideways, joined the party and concentrated on setting up caucuses campaigning for more women MPs.

At present hopes are pinned on a discussion document circulated by Jo Richardson, a document demanding a new highly powered ministry with cabinet representation. It proposes several not particularly far reaching reforms in the vein of — a minimum wage, abolition of married man's tax allowance, free child care for all three and four year olds. All this is quite simply inadequate, but Kinnoch is happy to have the sisters amongst his merry band of right wing hacks, for they mouth much the same anti-working class mentality draped in a left cover that he does.

This was most sharply seen during the miners' Great Strike of 1984-5. Comrade Bea Campbell voiced her reactionary view that violence on the picket line was an expression of maleness rather than class conflict and against the interests of women.

The labour movement's record of tackling the woman question is poor. Our Communist Party's approach has been appallingly limited by the present leadership to the hysterical all out support for feminism. As to the paranoid centrists, they refuse to even look at the question seriously, fobbing us off with 'women have equality in the Soviet Union'.

Communists must reject these approaches. Women's oppression fundamentally results from class society. A woman's role under capitalism ensures she remains in a marginal position in the labour market. Thus women have every interest in the destruction of that system which keeps them enslaved.

Jane Cable

POLEMIC

Centrist graveyard

New Communist Party, 5th National Congress Documents (23rd-24th November 1985), pp72, £1.00

EIGHT YEARS have passed since the mediocre pro-Soviet sycophants of the Surrey District Committee saved themselves from expulsion by leading hundreds of left centrist comrades out of the CPGB to the NCP graveyard.

Still offering a comfortable retirement home for struggle-weary communists, the NCP is now sucking up to the Communist Campaign Group (CCG) with sweet talk of "growing camaraderie" and "unity in action in defending the Morning Star" (p.48), hoping for a further infusion of stale blood from those who prefer a socialist club to the bother of real struggle. Never mind if the NCP was formed on the pretext of rejecting the *British Road to Socialism* and the CCG exists to defend it! Strategic questions, questions of principle, must not be allowed to mar a good opportunity!

The NCP tries to legitimise its fading existence in the eyes of its shrinking and ageing faithfuls by imaginatively claiming "ever wider recognition in the international communist movement" and "increasing respect in the Labour and peace movements" (p.17). The former is sought by the use of selected revolutionary phrases, and the latter by offering a "strategy" of abject subservience to reformism which makes nonsense of its revolutionary pretensions.

Upholding the "necessity for socialist revolution in the main centres of capitalism" (p.54) the NCP maintains "there can be no Socialism without the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class. The working class, with the support of its allies, must establish its state power and exercise it through the dictatorship of the proletariat" (p.17). Good stuff! (But what about parliament, and soviets?)

"We are the British detachment of the international Communist movement" (p.18)... If wishes were horses, beggars would ride! "Ever increasing international solidarity for its (NCP's) policies" is unconvincingly evidenced by listing fraternal delegates to the Congress from the Ethiopian Workers' Party, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, CP of Chile, ANC (but not the South African CP), SWAPO, CP of Catalonia, Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine and New CP of the Netherlands, as well as messages from the Polish United Workers' Party, Socialist Party of Australia, Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand and Communist Workers' Party of Sweden. An interesting list, but it hardly demonstrates recognition by the

world communist movement! Perhaps the main reason for the NCP's call for another world communist conference (p.68) is the vain hope that it will bring such recognition.

While the NCP upholds "the need for a revolutionary struggle towards socialism" (p.4) it is difficult to understand why it rejects the "reformist" (p.8) *British Road to Socialism* (BRS), because its own "strategy", which is "probably the most significant contribution of the NCP to date" (p.48), relies on both parliament and the Labour Party. "The NCP's policy is to call upon the working class to vote Labour. It does not put up candidates in opposition to Labour in general or municipal elections" (p.49) but instead issues "independent material" at election time, and looks forward to the time when the "working class is involved in the necessary campaign to enable the NCP to affiliate to the Labour Party" (p.49).

Where Lenin considered both independent communist electoral work and affiliation to the Labour Party as legitimate tactics, for the NCP "Marxist-Leninists" both affiliation and rejection of electoral work are strategic positions, as is the "electoral defeat of the Tories and their replacement by a Labour government committed to reformist(!) policies." Not for the NCP any revisionist hogwash about a Labour government of a new type!

Correctly rejecting the "alternative economic strategy" because it attempts to provide "better capitalism" (p.8), the NCP lists some "concrete economic and political demands ... around which the working class can win unity." Blinded by the "reality" of the Labour Party



Central Committee of the living dead

and parliament, the question of a revolutionary situation does not arise in the NCP mind: "The election of a (reformist) Labour government under pressure from the mass movement... would open up opportunities encouraging the working class towards taking state power" (p.54).

This easy Labourite parliamentary theory of "revolution", and the false belief that the NCP graveyard is the revolutionary party, is facilitated by a grossly exaggerated assessment of the strength of existing socialism, which is the "determining influence... in the international balance of forces" (p.11) and of the world capitalist crisis. "There has never been a capitalist crisis as profound as this one" (p.6). This idea is substantiated by a discussion of the extension of credit, which was in fact characterised by Marx as a key

feature of the pre-crisis phase of the capitalist economic cycle.

Ludicrously, the capitalist crisis is characterised as "unresolvable" (p.8), thus overlooking the whole post-war boom of world capitalism, the biggest ever boom phase which followed the resolution (after World War II) of the biggest (yet) crisis phase, the first general crisis of capitalism in its imperialist stage, which began in Lenin's time.

The impending second general crisis of world imperialism will undoubtedly dwarf the first, but whether this will occasion the end of capitalism will depend on the development of a revolutionary Communist Party equipped with revolutionary theory and steered in struggle. This job cannot be left to the sagging zombies of the NCP.

Ian Farrell

BOOK

Ireland's failed socialists

Graham Walker, *The politics of frustration: Harry Midgley and the failure of Labour in Northern Ireland*, Manchester University Press, pp241, £22.50

HARRY MIDGLEY'S evolution from a Belfast ILPer flirting with the theories of a certain James Connolly, through his time as the leader of the Northern Ireland Labour Party somewhat embarrassed by his previous association, to the very antithesis of Connolly, Unionist Party member and Minister of Education in Stormont in the 50s, gives not only an insight into the life of this 'socialist' turned bigot, but also more importantly, into the track-record of reformism in the Six Counties in this period.

From day one the NILP was clearly social-democratic, within it a multitude of left and right reformist trends. In the early twenties Midgley stood on the left, openly opposing partition. Such a platform met with marginal success as sections of the working class, both Protestant and Catholic, saw support for this left social democratic 'republicanism' as the expression of an independent

class position.

The NILP (formed in the early 20s) tried to resolve the national question by burying it. This still put it behind the Nationalist and Unionist parties, widening the gap as the national struggle, or Loyalist reaction, intensified. It proved impossible to build the unity of the Irish working class around economic issues alone when the thing that divided them, British imperialism, was ignored. By side-stepping the central issue, although it formally stood against partition, the NILP did not even make a weak reformist challenge to the status quo and was unable to make any significant inroads into the working class. True, the Loyalist workers were able to take class action but just so long as this did not challenge their position as a privileged stratum relative to Catholic workers, stemming from the link with Britain.

Because of the NILP's reformism it was unable to mobilise any working class resistance to the effects of capitalist crisis, nor did it want to. But it did resent the much more able, though much smaller, communist Revolutionary Workers Groups stepping into the breach to lead the struggles of the unemployed in the early 30s which united Protestant and Catholic.

As time passed the NILP buried the national question deeper still, ruling out of order a motion on Irish unity at the party's conference of 1937. Contradictions were evident in the party between Midgley and the leadership trend and the left nationalists in opposition. In 1942 Midgley sought a way out of this, and a chance to dig significant and permanent roots in the Protestant working class by splitting from the NILP to form the openly pro-partition, pro-British Commonwealth Labour Party. He need not have bothered. The NILP was hot on his heels; in 1919 its conference resolved that "the Northern Ireland Labour Party, being a democratic party, accepts the constitutional position of Northern Ireland and the

close association with Britain and the Commonwealth. Furthermore we are not seeking a mandate to change it." (M Farrell, *Northern Ireland, the Orange State*, p194)

To Protestant workers this begged the question 'why have two half-baked Unionist parties when you can have the real thing?' This had already occurred to Midgley and he followed through the logic of his position by joining the Unionist Party in 1947. From there he became Minister for Education in the Stormont parliament in 1950, and in 1957, after ten years of naked bigotry had the good grace to die.

In conclusion Walker writes "in terms of Labour politics in Northern Ireland Midgley was perhaps the most interesting failure in an area where no one has yet succeeded." (p221) The reason for this is apparent; when the crap hits the air conditioning the only choice to be made is for or against British imperialism, there is no third way. The Irish social-democrats caught in such a situation

have either been eclipsed because of their indecision, or done as Midgley and taken the pro-British option.

It may seem odd that despite all this, *Militant's* central demand as regards Ireland is to build the Labour Party there: a party time and time again proved pro-imperialist to the core, a block rather than an asset to the proletariat. But that's the pro-imperialist *Militant* for you.

Other leftists are guilty of similar sins. In practice the Spartacist League, SWP and our old chums around *Straight Left* and the Communist Campaign Group would have Irish workers forget their 'silly sectarian divisions' and unite like respectable British trade unionists. Like the Midgley of the 30s they wilfully ignore the material basis of this division — British imperialism and its creation of a Protestant labour aristocracy.

Conversely, organisations such as the RCG and RCP claim that it is impossible to break a significant number of Protestant workers from

their allegiance to British imperialism until British imperialism is broken from them by the victory of the national liberation war. This effectively posits a mechanical stagist concept of the Irish revolution.

For communists the task must be to unite the class war with the national war. Connolly understood this well: "We can only hope to carry our flag to victory by securing the aid of all workers everywhere who desire to see an effective force carrying the green flag of an Irish regiment whilst unconditionally under the red flag of the proletarian army."

Irish social democracy has failed on both counts, and the 'one out of two ain't bad' attitude of the revolutionary left (though better to stand with the Irish, as do the RCP and RCG, than with Britain as do the Millies) is insufficient. Connolly fought to unite both strands of the Irish revolution, and in doing so pointed to the tasks for today.

Alan Merrick

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WITHIN a very short space of time the Workers Revolutionary Party has undergone rapid change. From being the most inward looking sectarian organisation on the British left, developments subsequent to the Healy group's expulsion have opened up some of the most fluid debate in the workers movement. However this has been limited by the nature of the participants in the debate so far: all have been Trotskyists, all operating within the paradigm of various Trotskyist 'orthodoxies'. The crisis of the WRP is not that of the WRP alone, but one exacerbated by the lack of communist leadership of our class, a crisis that affects the whole of the workers movement.

The Leninist is of the opinion that providing answers to the questions posed by events in the WRP will require more than the location of a 'golden age' of Trotskyism by an empiricist approach of checking off 'formally' correct positions in relation to the positions of the Fourth International and its fragments at various points in time. What is needed for the positive resolution of this crisis is an objective reassessment of the *method* of the various Trotskyist groupings, and indeed a challenging of many of the fundamental assumptions of this trend. With this contribution we aim to broaden the scope of the debate, not by adding our stone-hewn 'ten commandments' to the rest, but by asserting the need for Marxist method. To quote your own founder, "Revolutionary thought has nothing in common with idol worship. Programmes and prognoses are tested and corrected in the light of experience, which is the supreme criterion of human reason."

Whither the WRP?

Since Healy's expulsion the political positions of the WRP have markedly improved, most notably on the issues of Ireland and gays, but the essential question of orientation and hence the attitude to its history is still to be resolved. Many problems have been revealed. Some within the ranks of the WRP have sought to give voice to them. Others have sought refuge behind rigid dogma. One such example is Tom Kemp, who asserts that "despite the degeneration of Healy and his clique there was no other organisation in Britain which preserved the continuity of the Marxist movement." (*Workers Press*, April 19 1986). We are supposed to accept, therefore, that a Chinese Wall exists between the leadership of an organisation and the political line which it determines. Kemp continues by characterising the present period as a "pre-revolutionary situation", and puts forward the slogan "prepare the general strike". Adherence to such a position of warmed-over Healyism can only take the WRP back to the grotesque subjectivism of the past.

Although Mike Banda, and those who stood by his criticisms of the Fourth International, have 'parted ways' with the WRP, the questions he posed were important, although he was somewhat lacking in solutions: "Contradictory to Trotsky, what we have seen is ... a manifest failure in theory and practice to grasp the nature of the epoch and concretise and enrich Trotskyism as contemporary Marxism." (*Workers Press*, February 7 1986) Who can deny that this is so? Theory, after all, sees its reflection in practice. In practice the Fourth International proved a fragile creature, never coming close to

fulfilling its promise to supercede the Third and win the allegiance of tens of millions of workers. This is objective fact. Banda may have been unable to face up to the tasks posed by his questions, but this does not negate their validity. He had no answers in essence because he was only able to view Trotskyism in isolation. He divorced the partiality of the Trotskyist movement from the universality of the world situation in which it exists, taking as sacrosanct its fundamental assertions. In this he is not alone. No contributors to the debate have been able to come up with a materialist analysis of the present period, especially the role and nature of the communist parties.

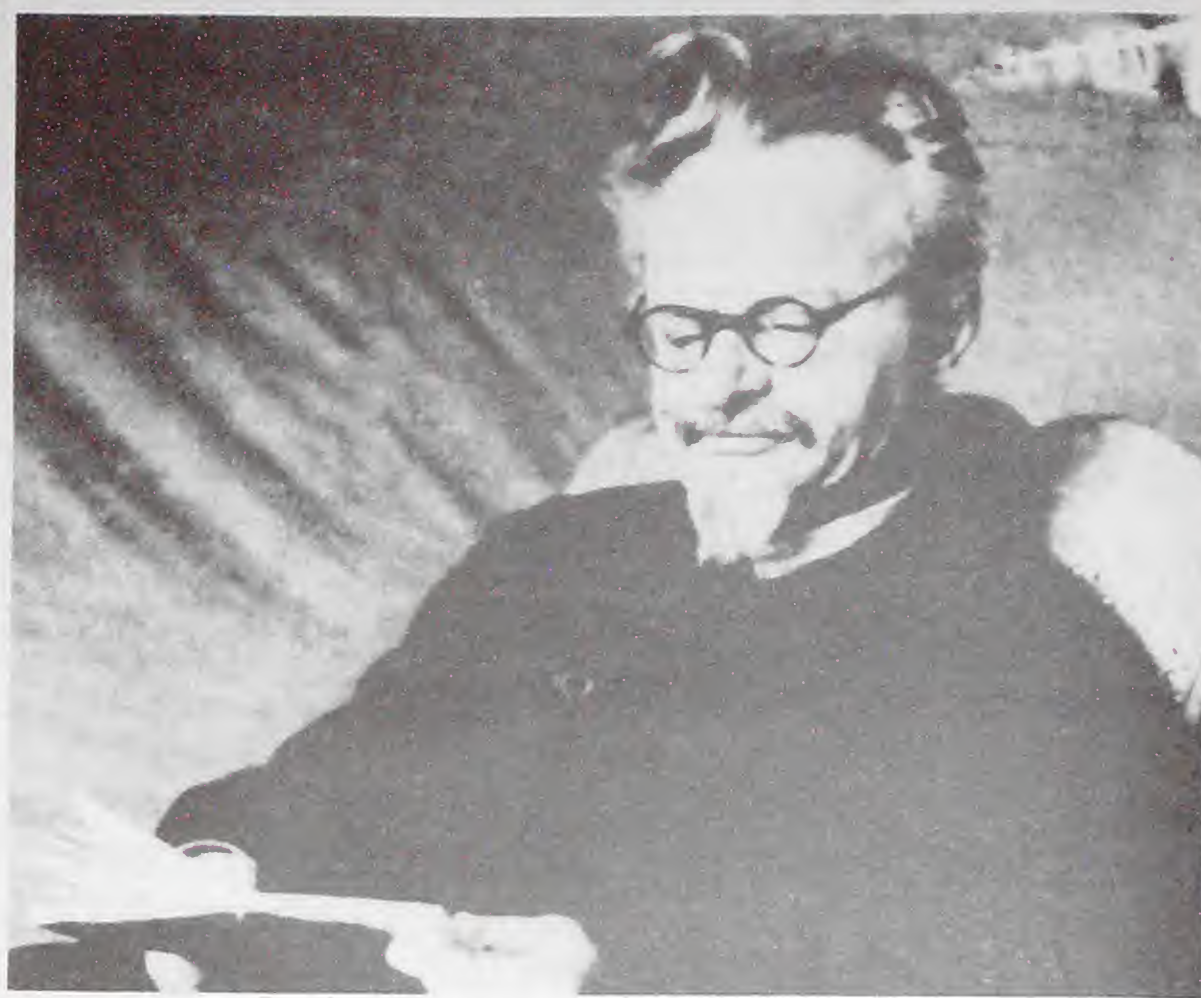
The Fourth International aborted

The Left Opposition, defended many Leninist positions within the Comintern against the rightward moving majority, around Stalin, which they correctly characterised as centrist. They orientated themselves accordingly: "We ... shall work as a Party faction. We shall not only endeavour to win Party members, but also our fellow workers, to a Leninist policy, and then recruit them to the Party to fight for that policy." (*The Communist*, September 1932, cited in *Against the Stream*, pp 97-8)

However, the successive defeats of the Opposition, and the strengthening of the centrists, and the defeat of the German workers in 1933 led Trotsky to desert the Comintern, characterising it as "dead for revolution". But surely this was essentially no different from the failure of the Chinese revolution in 1927? Trotsky then still characterised the Comintern as centrist. The new orientation towards the construction of a 'Fourth International' was in effect a defeatist desertion of the advanced section of the world proletariat, organised then as now, mainly within the communist parties. Germany 1933 was not the 1914 of the Comintern as Trotsky asserted, and did not precipitate its transformation to being a 'consciously counterrevolutionary' movement, as reality was to prove.

The Trotskyists proved unable to win the leadership of the working class away from the communist parties during or after World War II. It is unacceptable to blame this on 'Stalinist betrayals' and 'adverse conditions'. In Germany a mass Communist Party was built, despite the betrayals of the social democrats and the murder of the communists' leading cadre and the decimation of the rank and file in the 1919 revolution. The movement of Leon Trotsky proved unable to emulate the movement of Rosa Luxemburg.

The post-World War II revolutions threw the Fourth International into even deeper crisis. Counterrevolutionaries carrying out revolutions? Preposterous! Theories of the 'property overturns' in Eastern Europe abounded. This problematic issue for Trotskyists plus their manifest irrelevancy tore the Fourth International down the middle. Neither the International Secretariat nor the International Committee attempted to seriously confront the anomalies in their system which had given rise to the split; both chose to circumvent the gaping irregularities in different directions. The International Secretariat (IS) and later the United Secretariat (USec) adopted an openly 'revisionist' standpoint,



Trotsky's '4th International' failed the test of practice

OPEN LETTER to the WRP (Workers Press)

seeking to tail along behind existing movements, whether they were 'youth vanguardism' or 'Castroism', alongside many others, lastly (possibly the last ever) liquidating into social democracy in the shape of the Socialist League etc, in a last ditch attempt to find some relevance.

If it was the IS/USec that tailed reality, then it was the International Committee which ignored it, defending the ossified 'orthodoxies' of yesteryear. Thus in the midst of capitalism's most sustained boom the SLL could talk of an "unparalleled revolutionary crisis", and at a similar time (the mid 60s) of Cuban socialism as "a bonapartist regime still resting on bourgeois state foundations."

When you have to ignore reality to this extent to justify your world view it is time to dump that world view. Such 'head-in-the-sandism' is no substitute for revolutionary method based on objective analysis. Again we can even quote Trotsky to you on this: "What characterises a genuinely revolutionary organisation is above all the seriousness with which it works out and tests its political line at each turn of events." If we are to take Trotsky at his word then it is clear that the WRP has *never* been a genuinely Marxist-Leninist organisation; the acolytes have clearly ignored their masters' guidance.

Both the tailism of USec and the catastrophism of the IC are opposite sides of the same coin — that of the world outlook of Trotskyism, which dismisses the world communist movement as counterrevolutionary and regards themselves as the logical inheritors of the Bolshevik tradition. But a different picture is apparent if we are to be honest. It is unnecessary here to repeat the WRPs past 'relations' with the Communist Party of Iraq. But who then stood on which side of the class

line? Was it the Communist Party of Iraq fighting against the reactionary Baathist regime, or the WRP under Healy which prostituted itself to such regimes, to the extent of supporting (and possibly aiding) the murder of communists, which played a counterrevolutionary role? The answer is obvious.

Ho Chi Minh was responsible for the death of Trotskyists, but the Communist Party of Vietnam carried through a national democratic revolution under the harshest conditions, and now builds socialism under such conditions. Whether the killing of the Trotskyists is justifiable or not, it alone cannot be the criterion for determining the revolutionary credentials of the Vietnamese Communists, especially in the light of a successful revolution, hardly the actions of hardened reactionaries.

Castro, Mao, Kim Il Sung and others have committed errors; we do not try and paint them in Leninist colours, but they are hardly counterrevolutionaries. The WRP have favoured elements in truly counterrevolutionary social democratic parties over the communist parties. I ask you, can you imagine a social democratic party leading *any* kind of revolution? Oh yes, the revolutions may be 'bureaucratic', but look to your dictionaries comrades, there is a world of difference between the terms 'bureaucratic' and 'counter-revolutionary'. And even so, it is considerably more than the Trotskyists have been able to furnish the world's proletariat with. Rather to be a participant than a spectator. In this, for all your differences, you have a fundamental feature in common with all other Trotskyists. To reiterate, the Labourism of the Socialist League and the subjectivism of the WRP are but different symptoms of the same disease.

The World Communist Movement

Conversely it must be said that we have no illusions about the movement we are in. It can be broadly compared to the Second International *before* 1914, with a mainstream centrist trend; to the right, today's Bernsteins, the Eurocommunists; to the left a left centrist trend, and one that is growing, a Leninist trend.

Trotsky made valid criticisms of the communist parties. But Lenin acknowledged the correctness of many of the anarchists' criticisms of the Second International, as he did with many of the attacks by the 'Left wing' communists on the leadership of the official labour movement. This did not make Lenin an anarchist or a 'Left wing' communist.

Both these trends, although correct on particulars, had fundamentally incorrect world views. The same can also be said of Trotskyism, of whatever variety. The so-called 'Stalinist' counter-revolutionary revolution is merely a contradiction in terms, the logical conclusion of a false train of thought taken through to the end. Dialectics are not an excuse to hold two mutually contradictory positions at the same time, but a means to understand the world. This Trotskyism has manifestly failed to do.

Members of the WRP, the whole history of your movement needs reassessing. Take up these issues with us. Open ideological struggle was the weapon with which Lenin forged the Bolsheviks and the Comintern. We look forward to crossing swords...

Fraternally,
Alan Merrik
(for *The Leninist*)